

Florence or Mrs Wm E Gibson - Blacksmith



85 No River Rd.  
Midway  
654-1976

Mrs <sup>w</sup> Taylor McDonald  
77-77 West 400 No - 1366

~~July~~  
~~2002~~ See Lane Luke Wood (Wade)  
got pict of Billy Gibson

## HOW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS

sor, and spokesman and tactician for most of the major Federal water resource developments in the State that have been made and will be undertaken during this century. One of the largest water projects he helped fight through to Congressional authorization was the Colorado River Storage Project. This project was adopted in 1956 after five years of strenuous effort, as the largest single-package reclamation appropriation ever approved, a billion-dollar first phase of a four-state water development that will be constructed during the next two decades.

Senator Watkins was born in humble circumstances in Midway, Wasatch County, Utah, on December 18, 1886, a son of Arthur and Adelia Gerber Watkins.

His paternal grandfather was John Watkins, an English-born Mormon handcart pioneer who survived the rigorous ordeal of a walk from Iowa City during the fall and winter of 1856, and then helped colonize Wasatch County, working as a builder, bricklayer, carpenter, sawmill operator, irrigation and municipality works engineer, town board president, and ward bishop in the community of Midway.

His maternal grandfather was Dr. John Gerber, a converted Lutheran Minister and medical doctor from Switzerland who was a pioneer doctor in several Utah communities until his death in Midway in 1870, whereupon his widow, Marie Ackert Gerber carried on as a midwife and nurse for Wasatch County.

Young Arthur Watkins moved with his family to Vernal, Utah, at the age of ten. He attended Uintah County schools, including Uintah Stake Academy, and spent his summers learning irrigation agriculture firsthand on his father's farm.

At the age of sixteen he went to Provo to attend Brigham Young University, where he not only was a serious student but also won athletic honors as a forward on BYU's first championship basketball team.

At the end of his Junior year he was called as a missionary for the LDS Church in the Eastern States Mission, serving principally in Newark, N.J., and New York City. Following his mission he completed some of his undergraduate requirements at New York University and began the study of law. He then transferred to Columbia University Law School, from which he was graduated with an LL.B. degree in 1912.

While in New York he met Andrea Rich,

daughter of Mission President Ben E. Rich and granddaughter of Apostle Charles C. Rich and Lorin Farr, pioneer mayor of Ogden. They were married in 1913.

Returning to Utah to practice law, young Arthur Watkins first hung out his shingle in Vernal, Utah. There, in addition to his legal work, he served for a time as editor of the Vernal Express.

An appointment as Assistant County Attorney for Salt Lake County took the young lawyer to Salt Lake City in 1914. There he handled his county legal job and continued his private law practice on the side for three years, until his plans were abruptly changed by an illness, followed by a serious abdominal operation.

He turned to farming in Utah County for a vocational change of pace and for physical recuperation. Both objections succeeded and Senator Watkins still retains the fine fruit farm he developed in Orem.

Greatly improved health meant a return to legal activities, and in 1928 Lawyer Watkins opened an office in Provo and soon thereafter he was elected judge of the Fourth District Court.

The following year, 1929, he was chosen as President of the Sharon Stake, a post he was to hold for over sixteen years, until shortly before he went to the Senate in 1946. One of his most widely-known efforts as a church and community official was his role as one of the organizers of a cooperative community recreation project during the depression years, known as the Sharon Community Educational and Recreational Association. This group built the attractive *Scera Theater* as both a make-work project and community center, and provided a program of wholesome indoor and outdoor recreational activities which have become nationally famous.

During these years he also established a weekly newspaper, originally called the *Voice of Sharon* and later known as the *Orem-Geneva Times*. The newspaper is still published, but Senator Watkins sold out his interests as publisher shortly after he was elected to Congress.

As a farmer and attorney, he had taken an active interest in irrigation and reclamation. This interest crystallized into an active role in a major Federal reclamation project in the early 1930's, when he was chosen as chairman of a committee to organize Central Utah water users interested in obtaining

## HEBER BIOGRAPHIES

more water for agricultural and community use. Later, he became general counsel and a leading proponent of the Provo River Water Users Association—the sponsoring agent for the successful Provo River (Deer Creek) Reclamation Project, now virtually complete. This project made possible the wartime establishment of the steel industry in Utah County and provided water for the amazing postwar growth of Utah and Salt Lake communities.

Senator Watkins was first elected to the Senate in 1946, when he ran as a Republican candidate in a race which few thought he could win. One of his first major efforts in the Congress was successful sponsorship of the Weber Basin Project, a Reclamation project which has made possible the tremendous population and industrial growth in northern Utah, from Davis County to Brigham City. He also stopped the sale of the Bushnell Army Hospital as surplus, at a fraction of its value, and successfully proposed and secured the establishment of the Intermountain Indian School at Brigham City, one of the most effective single efforts to carry educational benefits to the Navajo people.

During his twelve years of service in Washington, he was a major influence on two key committees—Interior and Judiciary—and a member also of the Joint Economic Committee.

On the Judiciary Committee, he helped conduct scores of hearings on the Communist menace, conducted by the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, of which he was a member. He also helped revise our immigration laws and sponsored emergency legislation to admit refugees from countries torn by World War II and from Communist tyranny.

In addition to his activities in water resource developments, he took a prominent part in Indian affairs legislation and in the administration and improvement of mining and public lands laws.

In 1954, even though he was only beginning his second term in the Senate, he was selected as chairman of the Select Committee of the Senate to hear the charges made by fellow Senators against the late Senator Joseph R. McCarthy of Wisconsin. This was a job which he did not seek, but one which he accepted because of his deep-seated sense of duty, and it is to his credit that